

Kishore N. Kilpach

IRAQ . IRAN . HALFAYA — PASS

TEHERAN TO TRIESTE



THE STORY OF
THE TENTH INDIAN DIVISION

GOTHIC LINE . SENIO . TRIESTE



10th CORPS
AIR O.P.

25



13th CORPS
AIR O.P.

25



4th INDIAN
DIVISION

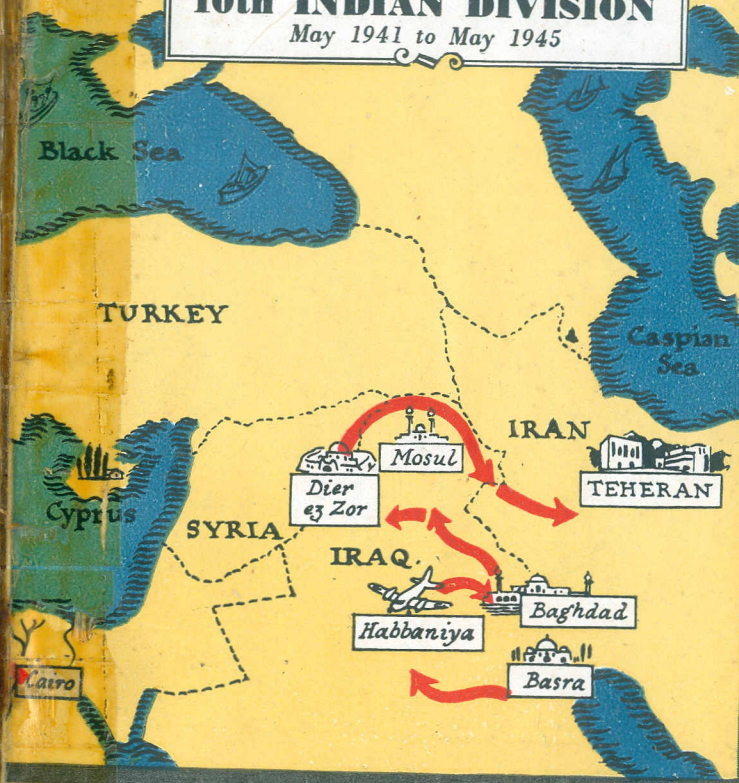


8th INDIAN
DIVISION

From TEHERAN TO TRIESTE



The Advance of the 10th INDIAN DIVISION May 1941 to May 1945



4th BRITISH
DIVISION



46th
BRITISH
DIVISION



78th
BRITISH
DIVISION



6th BRITISH
ARMoured
DIVISION



85th U.S.
DIVISION



3rd POLISH
CARPATHIAN
DIVISION



24th BRITISH
ARMoured
BRIGADE



7th BRITISH
ARMoured
BRIGADE

GOOD NEIGHBOURS



43rd GURKHA
LORRIED
BRIGADE



5th POLISH
KRES
DIVISION



Major-General DENYS REID, C.B., C.B.E., D.S.O., M.C.,
Commanding TENTH INDIAN DIVISION.



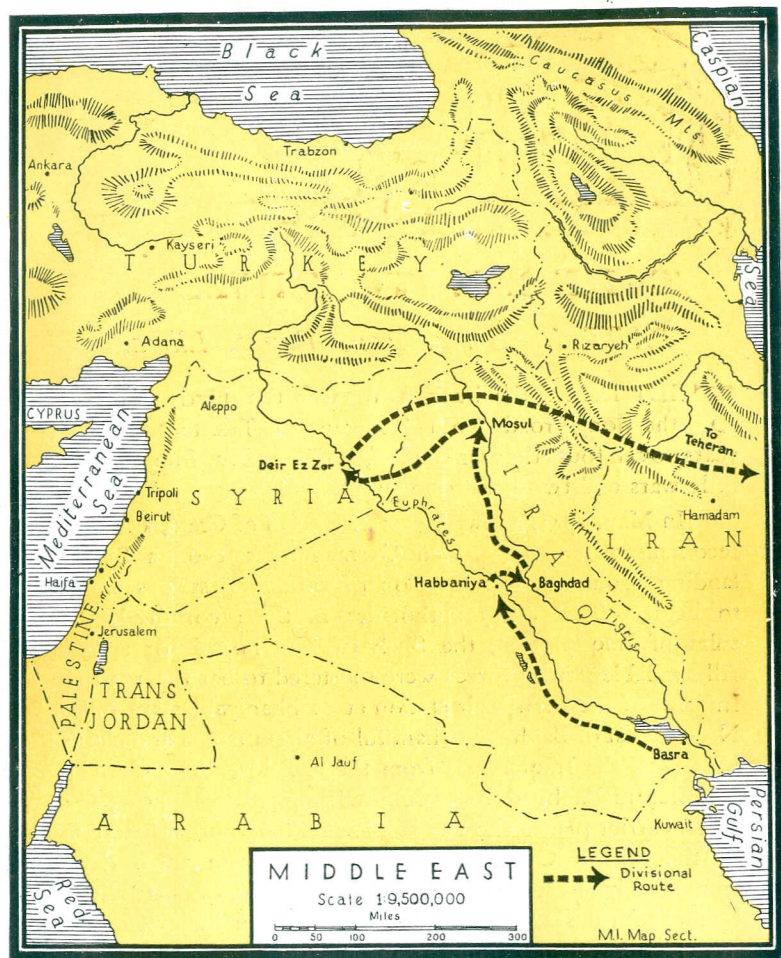
TEHERAN TO TRIESTE

PART I. Syria, Iran, Egypt, Libya.

THEY learned the business of war the hard way, on the long road from Teheran to Trieste. In four years, over four thousand miles, 10 Ind. Div. fought three little wars and two great campaigns.

In May, 1941, a few days after the fall of Crete, a British reconnaissance plane spotted German aircraft on a Syrian landing ground. The invasion of Middle East was about to begin. The Vichy authorities in Syria connived, the ruler of Iraq plotted, the Shah of Iran hoped for spoils. All available British forces were mustered to bar the road to India. At the R.A.F. air station at Habbaniyah, sixty miles North West of Baghdad, a handful of aircraftsmen and clerks beat back the Iraqi rebels from the airfields. The German Minister in Baghdad had promised immediate support, but when carrier planes showed in the sky, they bore a battalion of the King's Own, flown from Karachi in three days. Immediately afterwards, a company of 2/4th Gurkhas arrived by air from Basra, where 10 Ind. Div., under Major-General W. J. Slim, had begun to disembark. Habbaniyah was

Kishore N. Helgach



saved. From this small oasis of British authority, the struggle for the control of the great deserts and of the Middle East began.

Foiled in their half-hearted attack, the Iraqi began to slip away from the escarpments behind Habbaniyah. Whereupon the King's Own and the Gurkhas, with other oddments of support, struck down the road to Baghdad. At a crossing of the Euphrates fighting ensued before the bridge could be carried, but thereafter the rebellion collapsed like a pricked bubble. 20 Brigade remained on guard over the oil installations of the Persian Gulf and the port of Basra, while 21 and 25 Brigades pushed up through Baghdad to Habbaniyah, and on into northern Iraq, to make sure of the valuable Mosul oilfields. With his communications secured, General Slim swiftly moved part of his forces to the aid of the Indians and Australians who had invaded Syria from Palestine. 21 Brigade formed into three columns, which headed for Palmyra, Dier Ez Zor, and for the Turkish frontier. These columns moved at high speed. They encountered little opposition but a good deal of argument from Vichy officials who wished to save their faces. Four days after the columns reached their objectives, the Vichy commander asked for an armistice.

10 Ind. Div. columns immediately raced off in the opposite direction. The Russians had entered the Caspian ports of Iran, and were moving south. 25 Brigade crossed the frontier at Khanaqin, to the north east of Baghdad, and found strong Iranian forces blocking the mountain pass at Pai-Tak. Their strength, however, lay in numbers rather than in resolution, and General Slim in his staff car led the

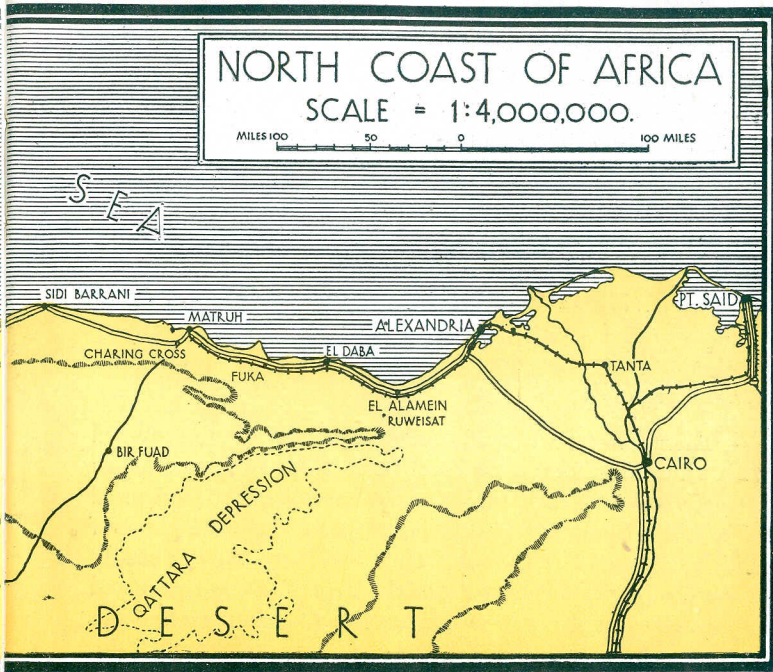
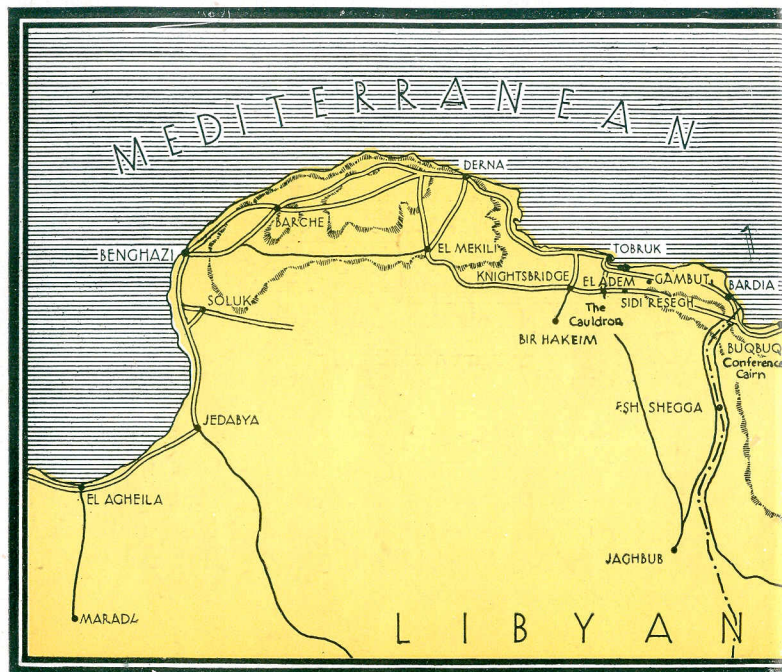
charge which burst through a position which men of determination might have turned into another Keren. The Indians hurried on, brushing aside opposition, and reached Teheran ahead of the Russians. The importance of this dash to the Iranian capital can best be assessed by its political implications, and by its effect upon the Russians, who on their first encounter with British and Indian troops, were surprised to find men of such energy and resource.

With Iran tranquil, 10 Ind. Div. concentrated at Mosul. When a decisive battle loomed in Libya in the spring of 1942, it was ordered to the Middle East. The division had altered, for three British battalions (King's Own, Duke of Cornwall's Light Infantry, and South Wales Borderers) had replaced three of the Indian units. Major-General T. W. Rees had taken command on General Slim's promotion. The Division had lost none of its ability to move, for in the last fortnight of May, it covered fifteen hundred miles of desert to concentrate in early June on the Egyptian frontier at Halfaya Pass.

The battle for Libya opened on May 27th. After a fair start it had gone badly. It became necessary to commit 10 Ind. Div. to its first serious fighting in bits and pieces. 20 Brigade went forward to man three of those ominous enclosures which the men called "cowpats", their officers "boxes", and gentlemen of the staff "defended localities". 25 Brigade concentrated near Gambut, half way between Halfaya and Tobruk. Duke of Cornwall's Light Infantry hurried into the desperate fighting at the Cauldron, while the other two battalions of 21 Brigade remained to guard the routes over the escarpment into Egypt.

Then followed a month of unmitigated disaster through the gloom of which, like sunlight through thunderclouds, gleamed great deeds by indomitable men. On June 5th, before the Duke of Cornwall's could reach their battle positions, they were destroyed by enemy panzers. On June 10th Bir Hacheim fell, and thereafter German armour roamed at will behind the British front. On June 16th, enemy artillery began to register on Sidi Resegh Box, manned by 1/6th Rajputana Rifles of 20 Brigade. As dark fell the panzer rush came. One company was overrun, but the perimeter was held. That night a general directive ordered retreat to Halfaya. The Rajputanas disengaged and made their way back safely. The remainder of 20 Brigade had no such fortune. On June 18th before dawn, 3/18th Garhwalis and South Wales Borderers, moving eastwards along the main coast road, were ambushed near Gambut by a strong enemy force which had swung up from the south. A certain number of men filtered through the road block in the darkness to come into Halfaya that night; but the trap had cost 20 Brigade 1,000 men.

On the crest of the Egyptian escarpment 10 Brigade worked feverishly to make the frontier positions secure. 5 Brigade of 4 Ind. Div. and a brigade of Fighting French were placed under command. But enemy armour was streaming past, moving eastwards by way of Conference Cairn. The remnants of 20 Brigade left for the Delta, and on the evening of June 22nd, the remainder of 10 Ind. Div. defiled down the switchbacks of Halfaya Pass, on a journey of 125 miles through a waterless desert in which the panzers were already moving.



In forty-eight hours, after brushes with armoured cars and adventures in crossing British minefields, 10 Ind. Div. reported at Mersa Matruh in good heart and full of fight. They took up positions on the eastern perimeter of that tiny dusty watering-place. 21 Brigade held the coastal sector among the sand dunes, 25 Brigade the escarpment and airfield, 5 Brigade, still under command, the south and south-western approaches to the town. On June 26th, 65 tanks and 3,000 enemy vehicles approached "Charing Cross," seven miles

west of Mersa Matruh. Two Italian and three German divisions were identified. It was obvious that the enemy would by-pass the town, detaching a holding force to keep its defenders busy until investment was complete. Tank raids were thrown against the perimeter, and one of these sudden sallies overran a number of posts on 21 Brigade's front. Lieut.-Colonel C. E. Morris, of 4/13th Frontier Force Rifles, was among the captured. He and a number of his men were hurried into Rommel's presence, for exhibition

purposes. Colonel Morris turned this arrogance to good account. He asked to be allowed to say farewell to his men. When he spoke, he instructed them in Hindustani as to how to escape. Many of them, including their commander, managed to slip away and to reach safety in the British lines.

On June 28th, the roads to the east of Mersa Matruh were cut. 10 Ind. Div. was ordered to break out. Lieut.-Colonel H. G. Siegert, C.R.E. of the Division, prepared the port installations for demolition. That night, with the waterfront ablaze and a bright moon overhead, groups of vehicles began to slip past the enemy's piquets, heading south-west into the desert, before turning into the east, where safety lay.

Then followed a wild and memorable night, crowned with a hundred fantastic adventures. Four enemy divisions lay between 10 Ind. Div. and clean country. All night and all next day hundreds of vehicles played a desperate game of hare and hounds as they felt their way between the enemy leaguers. Many wandered into the depths of the desert and never came back. Yet within twenty-four hours sixty per cent of 10 Ind. Div. had reached the bottleneck at Alamein, where General Auchinleck, in personal command, strove to fuse what remained of Eighth Army into a cohesive force.

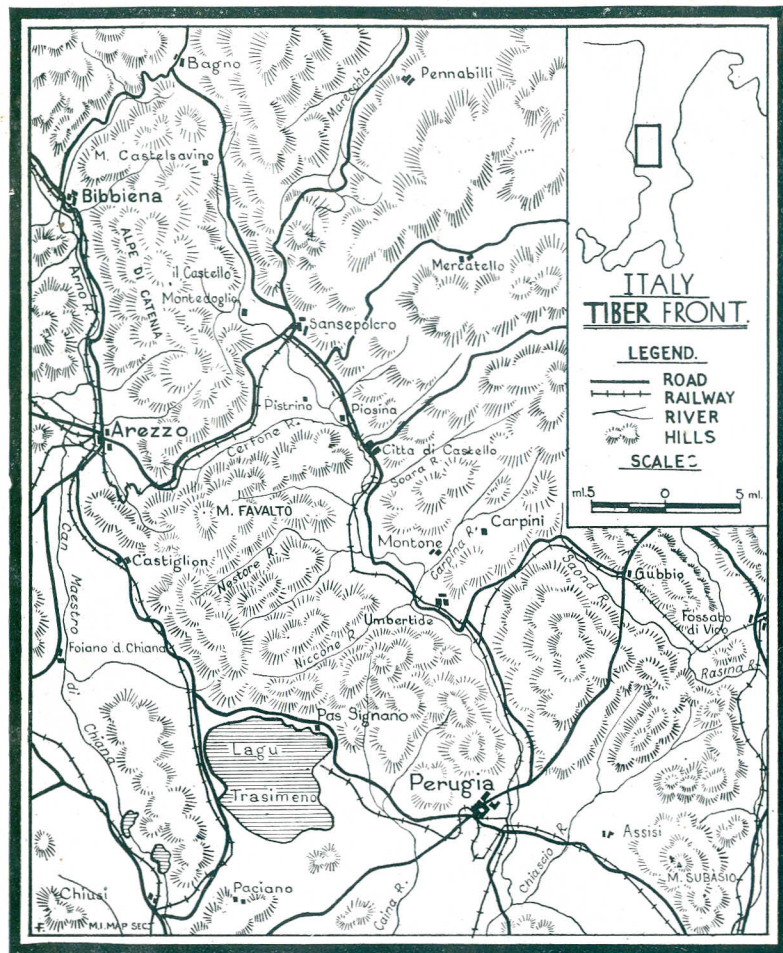
As the remnants filtered through, all men fit for battle were sorted out, and incorporated into a gallant band destined to make history. Brigadier R. P. Waller, C.R.A., 10 Ind. Div., mustered these handfuls, named them ROBCOL and hurried them off to occupy Ruweisat, the high ground which ran east and west, and which commanded alike the dunes to the north, where the South Africans were dug in, and the

scrabbly desert to the south, where the New Zealanders were thickening. This ridge was the key to Alamein. The fate of Middle East hung upon it. On the morning of July 2nd, the panzers tried to punch through along Ruweisat. For six hours the battle hung in the balance, but that night, for the first time in thirty-six days, the enemy withdrew to the west. Next day the German armour lunged again. ROBCOL stood firm. The tide had turned.

So ended the desert campaign for the 10 Ind. Div. It retired to lick its wounds in Cyprus. (Unfortunately one of the troopships was torpedoed in this passage for a loss of sixty men). Upwards of two years of garrison and security duty followed. To officers and men who had swept through the little wars, and who through no fault of their own had encountered nothing but disaster in their first major campaign, these seemed slow, scanty, scurvy years. They watched Eighth Army drive from Alamein to Tunis with envious eyes. In the summer of 1943, part of 10 Ind. Div. was briefed for the seizure of the Dodecanese, but other troops were afterwards entrusted with that ill-fated expedition.

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PART II. Italy.

THEN the war swept into Italy, and it became known that 10 Ind. Division would go there. It was a much changed Division; of the infantry withdrawn from Alamein, only the King's Own, 3/18th Garhwals and 3/5th Mahrattas remained. 10 Indian Brigade had replaced 21 Brigade, and Major-General A. B. Blaxland had handed over command to Major-General Wilfred Lloyd. On the latter's tragic death, Major-General Denys Reid, C.B.E., D.S.O., M.C., the famous fighting leader of a dozen desert battles, took command. He had recently escaped from Italy, and it was under his inspiring leadership that at the end of March, 1944, 10 Ind. Div. left Syria for Italy.

A month after arrival the Division relieved Canadian troops in the Adriatic sector near Ortona. A short seasoning gave everyone confidence in their ability to meet the Hun on even terms. Early in May the bloody deadlock at Cassino was broken, and the Germans were hustled in full retreat through central Italy. They fell back along the mighty spine of the Apennines, ribbed for two hundred and fifty miles by an interminable succession of ridges and rivers. The high hills commanded the countryside for miles. Rivers

and mountain torrents, bereft of their bridges, became grievous obstacles, while the towns and villages had been transformed by extensive fortification into fortresses.

It was mountain warfare, and during the tedious years in Cyprus, Syria and Palestine, the main theme of all training had been mountains. During the now legendary three weeks "TOUGH" exercise in Cyprus, the Division had lived and worked in the hills—it had thought and dreamed of them. After relief on the Adriatic sector by 4 Ind. Div., mountain warfare technique was polished up in a strenuous training period at Venafrò. When the call came at the end of June, 10 Ind. Div. was ready.

The German retreat had ended, and the enemy was regrouping his forces in the midst of the mountains to the north of Perugia, the lovely Umbrian capital near Lake Trasimeno. Seventy-five miles further north, on the precipitous approaches to the highest Apennines, his engineers strove to perfect the fortifications of the mighty Gothic Line.

10 Ind. Div.'s line of advance lay along both sides of the upper Tiber Valley, where among villages and ridges, and on slopes covering the river crossings, the enemy sought to sell ground at an extortionate price in blood. The Divisional front was wide and flexible, and it was obvious that the correct tactics were to harass continually, and with the constant threat of infiltration, compel the enemy to disperse his forces and to risk the loss of key positions. It was a battlefield upon which conscientious training promised to pay high dividends.

On June 30th, when 10 Ind. Div. began to press northwards on a front of about fifteen miles, only rearguards



HEAVY GOING—Brigade D.R. of the 10 Ind. Div. driving through snow and ice on the Italian front.



WOUNDED crossing floodbanked river on aerial cableway.

confronted them. 20 and 25 Brigades advanced to the east of the Tiber, with 10 Brigade upon its western bank. As they approached Umbertide, a market town twenty miles north of Perugia, resistance stiffened. 4/10th Baluchis, after an eight mile night march over unreconnoitred country, attacked Monte Acuto. Heavy fighting ensued before this height was won, with a bombardier of 97th Field Regiment acting as forward observation officer after the remainder of his party had become casualties. 3/1st Punjabis occupied Umbertide without great difficulty, but to the east of that town, the enemy continued to stand in strength along a small stream between Montone and Carpini. At dusk on July 6th, the King's Own swung away on a twenty mile night march. At dawn this fine battalion attacked Montone from the rear. In the bitter fighting which followed, the garrison of this fortress town was destroyed, an entire company being taken prisoner.

West of the Tiber, 10 Brigade conformed with the advance, clearing the enemy from his layback positions in a series of quick, bitter encounters.

2/4th Gurkhas, brilliantly led by Lieut.-Colonel G. A. Fullerton, D.S.O., crossed the heavily mined Nestore River, stormed and held the high ground around the church above Trestina. 13th Anti-Tank Regiment turned sappers and cleared away the mines; 154th Field Regiment laid down shoot after shoot which held off determined counter attacks. On July 16th, Durham Light Infantry, 4/10th Baluchis and 2/4th Gurkhas were fully extended in clearing Uppiano and Cedrone, the keys to Citta di Castello. Once more the artillery intervened powerfully, 13th Anti-Tank Regiment firing 1,000 mortar bombs in support of the Cedrone attack.



ARTILLERY OBSERVER in an old farmhouse directs artillery fire in support of Indian troops.

Eight miles north of Montone, and east of the river, the Tiber valley spreads into a basin between the hills. Citta di Castello blocks entry into the tankable terrain. Moreover, a main road from the Adriatic much used by the enemy for lateral communications joins the north-south highway here.

The enemy was very sensitive to probes in this neighbourhood. 10 Ind. Div. continued to apply unremitting pressure. On their right flank, in the high Apennines, the partisans were up, and in touch with Skinner's Horse near Pietralunga. Bit by bit the countryside was prised from the grip of the obstinate defenders. When they stood on the last ridge covering Citta di Castello, 3rd Hussars, in a "free-hand" tank assault, with King's Own and Divisional Sappers in support, stormed the high ground. On July 22nd the town was occupied.

During this advance, on July 10th, a section of 3/5th Mahrattas dashed at a strong enemy post. Only the section commander, Naik Yeshwant Ghadge, managed to close. With bomb and bullet he destroyed the defenders, beating the last man to death with clubbed tommy gun before falling mortally wounded. His dauntless gallantry won the Victoria Cross.

British armour was loosed in the Tiber basin, and on the night of July 25/26th, 3rd Hussars and King's Own repeated their exploit, destroying a strong enemy garrison between Piosina and Pistrino. 20 Brigade now crossed from the right to the left flank of the Divisional front, and taking over more and more ground from 4th Ind. Div. slogged forward. At Monte St. Maria, Citerna, and Anghiari, villages well-sited for defence, the enemy strove vainly to stem the advance. Near Anghiari, when Lieut.-Colonel A.



*Naik YESHWANT GHADGE, V.C. (Posthumous),
5th Mahratta Light Infantry.*

E. Cocksedge, D.S.O., had the misfortune to lose his foot on a mine, Major N. J. G. James, of 68th Field Regiment took command of the battalion and successfully completed the operation—another of the many instances of the intimate co-operation in 10 Ind. Div. of infantry and artillery.

By the first of August the end of the Tiber basin was in sight, and the river once more became a gorge in the Apennines. In front of the Division loomed the great massif of Alpi Catenaia, with the abrupt buttress of Monte Montalto covering its approaches. With great dash 3/18th Garhwalis carried this feature, and opened the way for the main assault upon the towering ridges behind.

10 Ind. Div. had speedily found its feet in these flexible, guerrilla-type operations. In a month they had fought forty miles forward. The technique of attack had steadily intensified. Day by day General Reid demanded deeper penetration, more intimate exploration of the enemy's rear, speedier infiltration. "Always lean forward" he said. A platoon would occupy a position unobtrusively. Next night a company would consolidate the ground. Soon a battalion would move in, to prepare for the next thrust against the harassed enemy.

(This narrative, as all battle narratives, must follow the fortunes of the infantry. But wherever the infantry of 10 Ind. Div. went, their gunners went also, full partners in every risk and every victory. In the advance to the Gothic Line, 68th Field Regiment had more casualties than some of the infantry units which it supported.)

Alpi Catenaia, standing 3,000 feet above the countryside, required more than infiltration tactics. Against the tree-clad, heather-studded crests of Filetto, Altuccia and Castello,



ABOVE: 2/4th GURKHA RIFLES cross the Montone under heavy mortar fire.



LEFT: B. Q. M. H. ZARI ULLAH, 4/10th Baluch Regiment, awarded the I. D. S. M. for bravery in Italy.

only a set piece operation promised success. On the night of August 3rd, 3/5th Mahrattas led off with a 5,000 yard advance to 1201, from whence after fierce fighting they carried Monte Filetto with the bayonet. Along the high razor-backed ridge they went, across "Death Valley" with its tangled undergrowth of beech and tall bracken, until by the following night they had dug themselves in among the pine woods on Altuccia. Following close behind came 2/3rd Gurkhas, who passed through and seized Castello, moving three companies along a narrow saddleback towards Regina, a bare eroded bluff at the hinge where the main ridge crooked into the east.

The enemy thought that he saw an opening for a successful counter-attack. Before dawn on August 6th, a strong force of paratroopers crossed a deep ravine, and fell on the right flank of the garrison force on Castello, consisting of one company of Gurkhas and the machine gun platoon of Northumberland Fusiliers. Undismayed, the Gurkha battalion commander, Lieut.-Colonel W. Somerville, D.S.O., M.C., on his wireless link ordered his Regina companies to return. Skilfully and quietly the company commanders responded to the call, and in their turn they fell on the flank and rear of the attacking force. This was the opportunity for which every Gurkha prayed—Germans in the mass and in the open. There was blood and horror in the glades between the beeches and pines that morning. Hardly a man of the attacking force escaped. Today a few bones and remnants of equipment bear witness to the prowess of the small sturdy men from the hills, who move silently with flashing kukris to kill with a stroke and a grunt and then pass on to the next.



3/5th MAHRATTAS fight their way along the high razor-backed ridge before crossing "Death Valley".



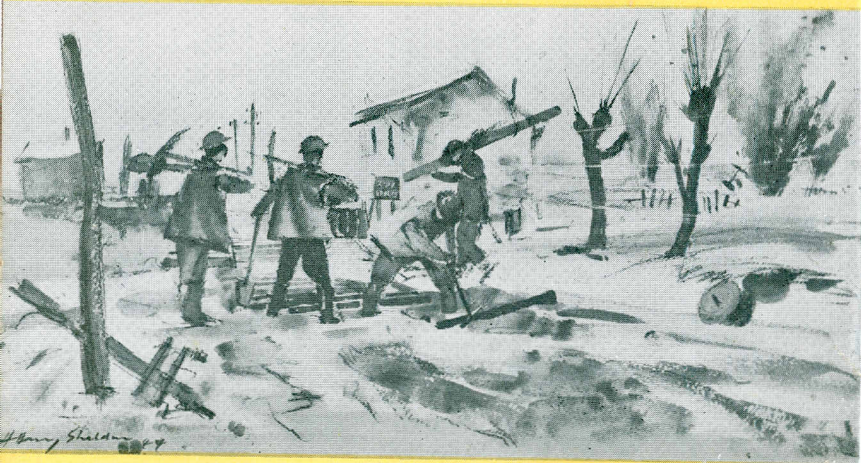
A platoon battles its way from house to house in San Paola.



With kukris flashing in the early dawn, 2/3rd GURKHA RIFLES counter-attack German paratroops in the bloody glades of Castello, in the neighbourhood of Altuccia.



FIGHTING PATROL of the 2/3rd GURKHA RIFLES near Ossano clear a farmhouse, aided by "artificial moonlight".

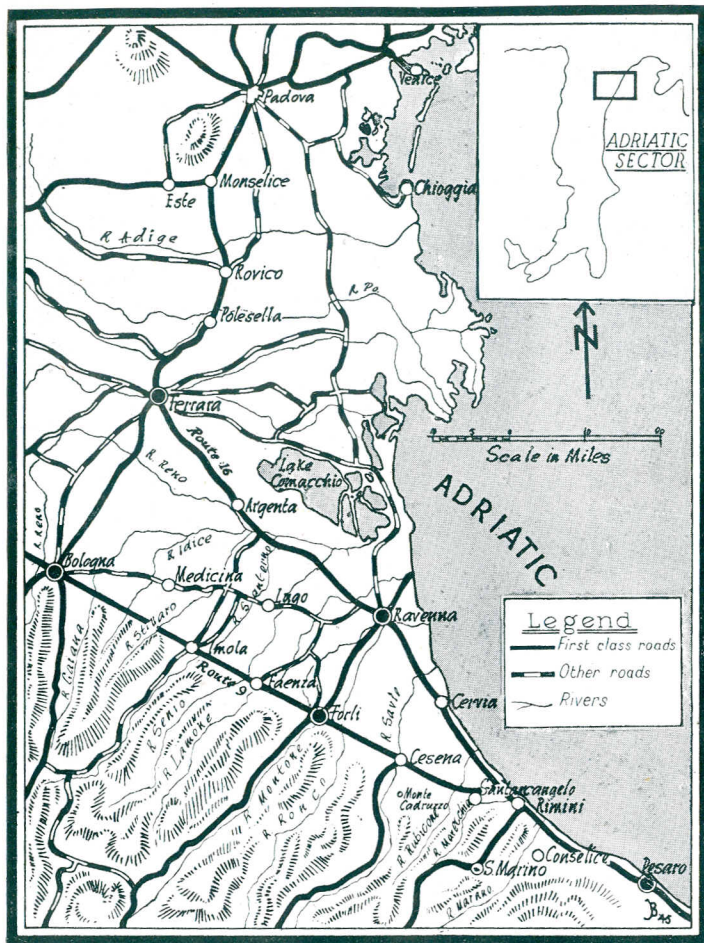


MADRASSI Sappers of an Indian Field Coy. maintain the supply routes during the drive for Bologna.

Enemy reaction to this invasion of his mountain fastness was prompt and vigorous. Fresh troops hurried up, and counter-attacked from Regina without avail. For several days Filetto and Altuccia were shelled from three sides.

During this major operation 10 Ind. Div. had been set the subsidiary task of building, with all possible speed, a jeep track to the crests of the ridges. This experiment in construction was designed to show what might be done when a set piece attack was mounted against the heights of the Gothic Line. The Divisional Sappers and Miners capped the achievement of their infantry when in less than forty-eight hours they opened a track upon which jeep convoys wound snakily up the steep and broken slopes of Filetto. Here was proof that even the most precipitous terrain could be made accessible for supplies.

10 Brigade (Brigadier T. N. Smith, O.B.E.) on the left, and 25 Brigade (Brigadier E. A. Arderne, D.S.O., O.B.E.) on the right, worked forward on the flanks of the Monte Castello salient. Again the Division took over more ground to the west, until it had inherited the entire Corps front. Lovat Scouts, Skinner's Horse and 2/4th Gurkhas became a roving force on the far left flank. The Division held a front of nearly twenty miles. British and Indian patrols vied in depth of penetration. General Reid altered his slogan to "Step Up. Keep Stepping Up"—in other words, wherever patrols penetrated, companies must be at their heels. Everyone responded magnificently. At Montedoglio, on the Tiber bottleneck, a patrol of 8th Manchesters crossed an enemy minefield in broad daylight, and took 26 sunbathers prisoner. 3/1st Punjabis finally secured Regina by walking in on it from the rear. 1/2nd

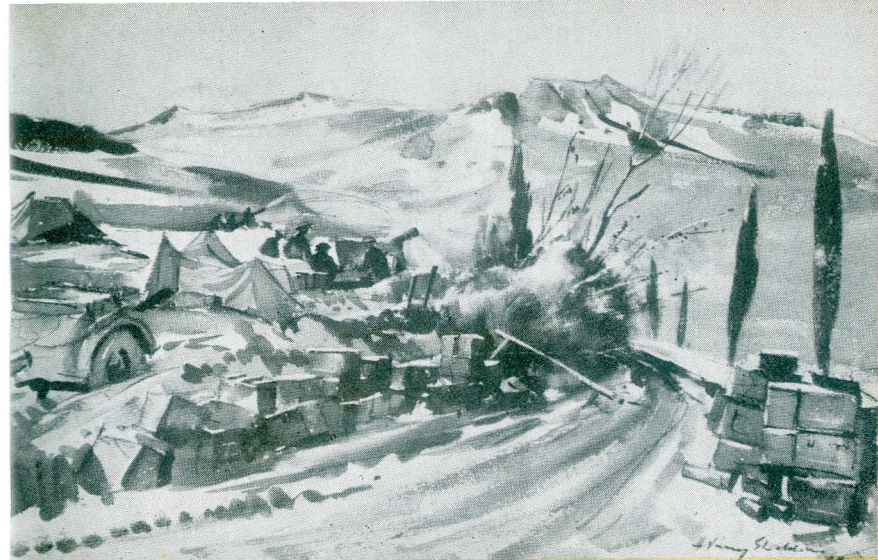


Punjabis, lately returned to 20 Brigade, turned a reconnaissance patrol into a bayonet charge, swept through Montalone, and rushed on against the eastern slopes of Monte Del Verna, a position of great strength. Bitter fighting ensued, with five counter-attacks smashed and five hours mopping up before the heights were firmly held. A change in brigade frontages sent 20 Brigade (Brigadier J. B. MacDonald, D.S.O., O.B.E.) through 10 Brigade to take Bibbiena. 10 Brigade, after relieving 25 Brigade on the right of the Divisional front, steadily infiltrated into the outworks of the Gothic Line. By the middle of September, 20 Brigade at Monte Baralla, 10 Brigade at Castelsavino and Bulciano, were within a few hundred yards of the massive fortifications behind which the enemy stood at bay. (As the first arrivals, Skinner's Horse brought up their 75 millimeter gun and lobbed a shell at the defences.) Everyone anticipated a major operation with the greatest confidence. But high level decisions supervened, and in the last ten days of September 10 Ind. Div. was whisked away to the Adriatic Coast, to join in Eighth Army's drive for the plains of Northern Italy.

Nine days after handing over on the Arno-Tiber front, the Division moved into its new battle line, in the eastern foothills of the Apennines, between the Marecchia and the Fiumicino rivers. The Adriatic countryside lacked the substance of the Tiber landscape. The hills were bare, sharp ridges, slashed by precipitous ravines. Everywhere rivers crossed the line of advance, and as the autumn rains set in, placid streams became brawling torrents overnight. But "leaning forward" and "stepping up" tactics rose superior to freakish terrain and inclement weather. Without delay

10 Ind. Div. began to infiltrate and to pinch out German strongpoints. Beginning on October 4th, King's Own, 2/3rd Gurkhas and 1/2nd Punjabis bit San Martino and Sogliano out of the enemy defence system. 10th Baluchis joined in seizing Strigara with the help of 154th Field Regiment, which lost four troop commanders killed and wounded in this action. These advances gave a start line for assault on a series of knife-edged ridges which ran into the north until they faded into hillocks outside the important road junction to Cesena. The clearing of these ridges afforded Eighth Army a wide front upon which to debouch into the plains.

As the operation began, the abominable winter weather for once served the Division well. 43 Gurkha Lorried Brigade, water-logged along the Fiumicino, came inland in search of firmer footing and passed under Divisional command. All four brigades were now committed to the assault. On October 7th, Mahrattas and Gurkhas of 20 Brigade seized Monte Farneto without great difficulty, but thereafter endured continuous counter-attacks which they beat back with heavy losses to the enemy. 2/4th Gurkhas joined 25 Brigade in a surge against the San Paola-Roncofreddo Ridge. The Garhwalis stormed San Lorenzo, while the Gurkhas battled their way from house to house in San Paola. 3/1st Punjabis came forward, to stem a strong counter-attack, and to make Roncofreddo secure. The Durhams infiltrated into positions at Monte Spaccato, and were waiting for the enemy when the morning mist lifted. All day they beat off attempts to recover the position, and next day they forged deep into the enemy's defences at Sorrivalli, with 97th Field Regt. moving up to cover them through well-nigh impassable terrain. On the extreme left, 43 Brigade passed through



154th FIELD REGIMENT R.A. in action at Quartolo near Faenza.

20 Brigade, and established itself on the high ground. The stage was now set for a general assault to hurl the shaken Germans from their last eyries above the Adriatic plain.

The attack was mounted with 25 Brigade on the right, 10 Brigade in the centre, and 43 Brigade on the left. The assault went in on the Chicco-Della Vache ridge system, which stood above the east bank of the river Savio, commanding both highways converging at Cesena. Three days and nights of bitter fighting followed, in which the stubborn enemy was forced back, house by house, hummock by hummock, along the razor-backed ridges. 10 Brigade encountered

intense opposition at Bora, where Major N. A. Scott of 2/4th Gurkhas lost his life in a most gallant attempt to seize the hamlet. At Chicco, all three battalions of 43 Brigade were committed to some of the stiffest fighting of the campaign. The enemy again and again flung from the high ground, returned to the attack along the slopes of the ridge. Finally the Germans gave up the struggle. 25 Brigade passed through and exploited the gains ostentatiously, in order to lead the enemy to believe that the advance would continue along the same axis.

Twelve miles to the south, Central India Horse searched the river Savio until a bridgehead was secured. 20 Brigade silently and unobtrusively crossed, and swung through the hills toward Monte Cavallo, where an intricate ridge system thrust a peninsula of high ground into the open plains, and dominated the highway between Cesena and Forli. This broken ground had also been reached by elements of the other three brigades, which had descended from the hard won ridges, had crossed the Savio, and were probing into the hills. The enemy threw in storm troopers in a last stand. At strong points along the river and in the hills bitter fighting ensued. In an epic episode, Naik Trilok Singh, of 3/18th Garhwals, when his section was out of ammunition announced that he was going to capture an enemy machine gun. He stalked a spandau post, destroyed the crew, and brought back gun and ammunition in time to beat off the next counter-attack singlehanded. Unfortunately this great soldier died gloriously in covering the withdrawal of his section.

Brooking no denial, 20 Brigade closed up on Monte Cavallo, while 25 Brigade attacked the adjacent high ground



10th INDIAN DIVISION D.R. standing on oil drum directing traffic at Forli.

to the north-east. The time-tried team of Mahrattas and Gurkhas swept the enemy from his strongholds in a silent attack on the night of October 23rd. This fighting cost the Mahrattas one of their finest officers in Major Anandrao Kadam. 43 Brigade came up on the right flank, and all three brigades struck for the line of the river Ronco. The stream was reached to the north of Meldola, and at first glance its swollen torrents seemed an impassable obstacle. Nabha Akal Infantry—a splendid State Forces battalion lately taken under command by 20 Brigade—managed to ferry two companies across. Further north 43 Brigade discovered

an undamaged viaduct, over which elements of 2/8th Gurkhas passed on the night of October 25th. These two forces constricted the enemy in his last tiny apex of high ground. 25 Brigade passed through, and patrolled towards the Rabbi, reaching Forli airfield. The Poles from the west, 46th British Division from the east, were converging, and on being squeezed out of their front, 10 Ind. Div. withdrew to well-earned rest. To none was rest more grateful than 13th Anti-Tank Regiment, who during the advance between the two rivers, had rafted their guns, had winched them across river-beds, had slung them over by aerial rope way, hand-hauled them through shallows, and even towed them with oxen through the hills.

These operations among the eastern spurs of the Apennines exhibited 10 Ind. Div. in its most adept role. Concealment, unobtrusive infiltration, then a sudden violent pounce upon enemies taken unaware—so ran the tale of attack after attack. But no campaign invariably re-enacts the same set piece operation, and when after three weeks rest, the Division returned to a sector on the Montone river, it was to another sort of war. On these flat, open plains, the enemy held continuous positions covered by minefields, and the minefields covered by formidable concentrations of mortars and artillery. The rivers themselves—Montone, Lamone, Senio, Santerno, Sillaro—crossing and commanding the plain at regular intervals, had been transformed into elaborate trench systems. To reach the floodbanks unseen was next to impossible: to storm them, a grim task indeed.

But in the sixth year of war, British armies were equipped for almost everything. Tanks, self-propelled guns, mortars, new types of bridgemen, new patterns of aerial barrage, new



4/10th BALUCH REGIMENT in the front line on Christmas Day overlooking Castel Bolognese.

deployments of artillery, extensive use of smoke and artificial moonlight, were a few of the devices perfected for the support and protection of infantry. Bit by bit, 10 Brigade, which led the advance, worked its way forward and cleared the eastern bank of the Montone. The Durhams crossed the river and established a small bridgehead. The New Zealanders, who had forced the river along the line of the Faenza Forli highway, allowed 20 Brigade to cross the Montone on their front, and thereafter to work to the north-west, until it linked up with 10 Brigade. At dawn on November 30th, all seven battalions of these two brigades

thrust out in different directions, to clear up the area between the Montone and the Lamone. In the next four days, many sharp sudden fights occurred in which the tanks of North Irish Horse and of 6th Royal Tank Regiment rendered signal services to the Indian infantry. By December 5th, the line of the Lamone was firmly held.

On December 7th, 25 Brigade passed under command of 46th British Division, and proceeded into a troublesome situation at Pideura, south west of Faenza. Here the Ninetieth Panzer Grenadiers—the reconstituted Ninetieth Light Division of the Afrika Korps in Western Desert—were behaving with traditional aggressiveness. 10 Ind. Div. took over this sector on December 11th, and three days later 10 and 25 Brigades attacked with the New Zealanders on their right flank. For the first time, a Divisional attack failed to achieve all its objectives in the initial stages. Durhams, King's Own, 4/11th Sikhs (lately acquired from 4 Ind. Div.) and 3/18th Garhwals bore the brunt. The attack continued, and the Garhwals in particular gave the enemy a thorough beating at Zula and in a most dashing night attack at Monte Coralli. The artillery as usual were well to the fore, and both forward observation officers of 97th Field Regiment were recommended for decorations by infantry commanders for their services at the crises of these attacks. The New Zealanders were able to make their ground, and this gave 10 Brigade a clear run to the banks of the Senio. 4/10th Baluchis crossed this river, soon to be famous, and established a small bridgehead.

Here for five weeks the Division held a two brigade sector. The Divisional log records these weeks as



A fighting patrol wipes out an enemy patrol near Tebano.

“uneventful”. Nevertheless, fighting patrols nightly searched out pockets of the enemy and destroyed them in quick fierce clashes. Once again the Garhwals were to the fore, bickering with paratroopers who crossed the river looking for trouble, and invariably finding it. In other encounters the Sikhs and Nabha Akals chastised the enemy. The support of 6th Royal Tank Regiment during this tour was noteworthy.

On February 9th, Polish troops relieved the Division on the Senio, and the Indians shifted with customary alacrity

across the Apennines to Monte Grande, a hilltop sector north of the Sillaro River, fifteen miles from the outskirts of Bologna. It was a place of ill-omen which had seen much heavy fighting. The Germans set great store by it. The country was deerstalker's landscape, with high lookouts and deep scours. Everyone could see a good deal of everyone else, so a smoke screen, supplied in the first instance by 85th U. S. Division, and afterwards by ack-ack gunners, served to cloak maintenance movements in the Sillaro valley.

For two months 10 Ind. Div. pinned down the enemy in this important sector. Strong offensive patrols constantly penetrated the defences. 1/2nd Punjabi detachments spent forty-eight hours in the German rear, penetrating for a mile and a half. Later in March the same battalion and 3/5th Mahrattas clashed with the enemy in deadly hand-to-hand exchanges. 13th Anti-Tank Regiment, which never had any tanks to shoot at, yet never stood idle, showed its versatility by manning, in a single month, mortars, 75 millimeter guns, 95 millimeter howitzers and finally Sherman tanks, in which the gunners scouted enthusiastically. At the beginning of April a set-piece attack was planned, but before it could be mounted, the Italian Folgore Division relieved the Division, which defiled down the eastern slopes of the Apennines at top speed, bound for a critical sector of the Adriatic battlefield which it reached within forty-eight hours of relief.

On April 11th, the massive Eighth Army assault had smashed the Senio and Santerno defences. On the afternoon of April 15th, the New Zealanders, in the van of that attack, reached the Sillaro River. Simultaneously, 10 Brigade came up on their flank, with instructions to extend the breach



3/18th ROYAL GARHWAL RIFLES attacking Monte Coralli.



In deep snow and icy wind a patrol on Monte Coralli Ridge.

and to exert the utmost pressure. The Kiwis, behind a mighty barrage, swept across the river. 10 Brigade kept pace, rooting out and destroying the last fanatical defenders. A hole had been punched in the dyke: grimly but vainly the enemy sought to stem the flood on the line of the Gaiana and Idice rivers. Here with bared teeth the disintegrating Wehrmacht made its last stand. The New Zealanders were held up, and terrific fighting ensued. 20 Brigade passed through 10 Brigade, and battled its way up to the Idice. On the afternoon of April 20th, 1/2nd Punjabis secured a footing on the far bank. Attempts to reinforce their tiny bridgehead failed. This fine battalion lost heavily, and only outstanding courage and tenacity enabled the survivors to keep their grip on the crossing.

With 1/2nd Punjabis, 3/5th Mahrattas and 2/3rd Gurkhas in the van, the Indians smashed at the faltering defences. 20 Brigade exploited as far as Mazzolaro, while with Skinner's Horse as screen on the right flank, 25 Brigade drove for the River Reno, along the line of Route 64. On both flanks the pursuit had turned into the north: Sixth British Armoured Division on the right, and the New Zealanders on the left, were converging in a drive for the Ferrara and the Po crossings. 10 Ind. Div. was squeezed out on their front, but were immediately briefed for hill fighting thirty miles ahead, where the picturesque ridge of Colli Euganei, studded with castles and monasteries, interposes the barrier in front of the ancient city of Padua.

Before the stricken quarry could reach this cover, the kill came. In the small muddy village of Malalbergo, near the Reno, 10 Ind. Div. heard the "Cease Fire."



UP INTO THE LINE AT MONTE GRANDE



ROUNDING UP SUSPECTS AFTER THE WAR

The men who had come so far and had fought so well were destined to have a glimpse of the fair lands ahead. When tension arose in Trieste, the 10 Ind. Div., as often before, came up on the flank of the New Zealanders, and occupied the rocky ridges between Gorizia and the sea. Here they were billeted in the same villages with Yugo-Slav troops who had seized Venetia Giulia. It was delicate ground indeed, and it behoved everyone, in General Reid's native tongue, to "gang warily." During this occupation the fighting men of 10 Ind. Div. won by friendship a victory no less meritorious than their feats of arms. By hospitality and by tact and by forbearance they softened the suspicions of the dour and hardy men who might have been their adversaries, and so helped to lessen the shadow which clouded the first weeks of peace.

So ended the odyssey of the Tenth Indian Division.

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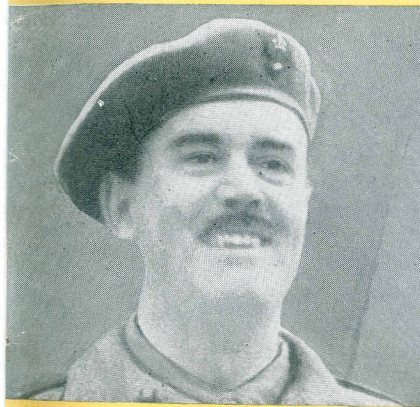
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PERSONALITY PAGES



DIVISIONAL HEADQUARTERS STAFF, NEW YEAR 1945. Left to right : Lt.-Col. Hutchinson, Lt.-Col. Moberly, G.S.O.1, Brig. W. R. Goodman, D.S.O., M.C., Commander Royal Artillery, Lt.-Col. Kirrage, A/Q., Capt. Gardner, A.D.C. and Maj.-Gen. Reid.



*Lieutenant-Colonel Hutchinson, D.S.O.,
Commander Royal Engineers.*



*Brigadier E. A. ARDERNE ; D.S.O.,
O.B.E., Commander 25th Infantry
Brigade.*

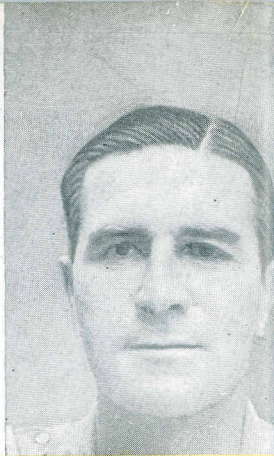
THREE COMMANDERS



Brigadier J. B. MACDONALD, D.S.O., O.B.E.,
Commander 20th Ind.
Infantry Brigade.



Brigadier T. N. SMITH,
D. S. O., O. B. E., Com-
mander 10th Infantry
Brigade.



Lieutenant-Colonel W.
SOMERVILLE, D. S. O.,
M. C.

TWO ORIGINALS



The only officers who began and finished the war with the Tenth Indian Division.
Lt-Col. B. ASHFORD, O.B.E., CRIASC,
10th Ind. Div. of Ellerslie, St. Heller,
Channel Islands.



Capt. JAMIE GARDNER, A.D.C. to
Comd., 10 Ind. Div., Cameronians
(S.R.), of Coatbridge, Scotland.

FAMILIAR FACES I



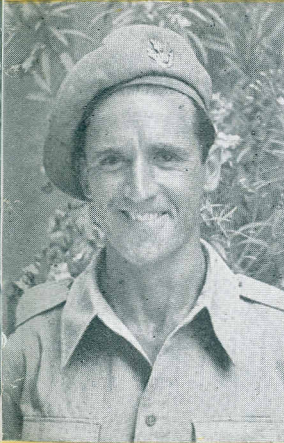
Sgt. FARRELL, B.E.M.,
21st Field Ambulance,
20th Brigade, of 99 Fulwell
Rd., Teddington,
Middlesex.



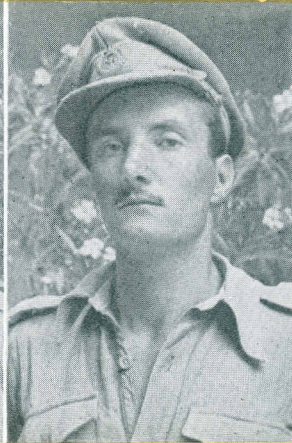
Sub. MOHAMMED TAQI,
Sonara, Sultanpurah, U.P.



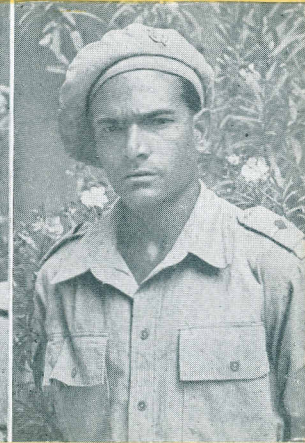
Sub. Major DAULAT
SINGH, M.C., 1/2nd
Punjab of Nat. Ludhiana,
Punjab.



Pte. MULLIGAN, 2nd
Loyals, 4B, St. James'
Gardens, Liverpool.



Lieut. V. MASON, 61st
Field Coy. R.E., of 50,
Woodlands Rd., Southall
Middlesex.



Jem. K. O. DAVIS, 61st
Field Coy. I.E., of Konik-
kara House, East Bazaar,
Trichur, Cochin State, S.
India.

FAMILIAR FACES 2



Sub. AHMED KHAN,
M.C., 4/11th Sikhs, of
village Trap, District
Campbellpur.



Sub. B. H. ANWAR
SINGH, M.C., 3/1st
Punjab, of village Kolila.



Sub. RITHU SING
RAWAT, I.O.M., I.D.S.M.,
3/18th R. Garhwal Rifles,
of village Arkot, Patti
Bamond, State Tehri,
Garhwal.



Jem. MAHADEO
PARSHAD, M.M., I.S.C.,
village Chignda, District
Partabi, Garhwal, U.P.



Naik MANGNE, M.M.,
4/11th Sikhs, Village
Ballagun, District Sialkor.



Jem. P. K. ACHUTHAN,
10th Field Coy., Village
Rarapanon Gadi, District
Malabar.

FAMILIAR FACES 3



Hav. RISAT KHAN, M.M.,
10th Baluch, of Khanpore,
Rawalpind.



Lt.-Col. N. F. FOSTER,
D.S.O., 154th Field Regt.
(L.Y.) of The Gables, Elie,
Fife.



Capt. R. F. CRICHTON,
M.C., 2/4th Gurkha Rifles
of Teynham, Sitting-
bourne, Kent.



L/Cpt. BULL, M.M.,
Durham Light Infantry,
229 Dallow St., Burton-
on-Trent.



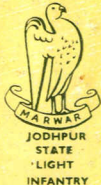
Lt. G. F. ANNAGAN,
M.B.E., M.M., Durham
Light Infantry, of 34
Collingwood St., Helton-
le-Hole, Co Durham.



Sub. MUTILAL
GURUNG, M.C., I.D.S.M.,
2/4th Gurkha Rifles, of
Kai Pokhra, Nepal.



INDIAN
MEDICAL
SERVICE



JODHPUR
STATE
LIGHT
INFANTRY



NABHA AKAL
INFANTRY



4th GURKHA RIFLES



1st GURKHA RIFLES



ROYAL
GARHWAL
RIFLES



SIKH
REGIMENT



BALUCH
REGIMENT



MAHRATTA
LIGHT
INFANTRY



2nd
PUNJAB
REGIMENT



1st
PUNJAB
REGIMENT



INDIAN
SIGNAL
CORPS



INDIAN
ENGINEERS



SKINNERS
HORSE



THE KING'S
OWN
LIGHT
CAVALRY



ROYAL
INDIAN
ARMY
SERVICE
CORPS



INDIAN
ARMY
ORDNANCE
CORPS



INDIAN
ELECTRICAL
AND MECH-
ANICAL
ENGINEERS



PROVOST
CORPS



68
FIELD
REGIMENT
R.A.



97
FIELD
REGIMENT
R.A.



154
FIELD
REGIMENT
R.A.



13 ANTI-TANK REGIMENT R.A.



THE KING'S OWN
LIGHT CAVALRY



DURHAM LIGHT INF.



MANCHESTER REGT.



THE LOVAL REGIMENT



ROYAL
NORTHUMBERLAND
FUSILIERS



HIGHLAND
LIGHT
INFANTRY

THE TENTH

10th INDIAN INFANTRY BRIGADE.

1st Durham Light Infantry, 4/10th Baluch Regiment, 2/4th P.W.O. Gurkha Rifles, Jodhpur Sardar Light Infantry.

20th INDIAN INFANTRY BRIGADE.

8th Manchester Regiment, 2nd Loyal Regiment, 1/2nd Punjab Regiment, 3/5th Mahratta Light Infantry, 2/3rd Q.A.O. Gurkha Rifles, Nabha Akal Infantry.

25th INDIAN INFANTRY BRIGADE.

1st King's Own Regiment, 3/1st Punjab Regiment, 4/11th Sikh Regiment, 3/18th Royal Garhwal Rifles.

RECCE REGIMENT.

Skinner's Horse.

DIV. M. G. BATTALION.

1st Royal Northumberland Fusiliers.

ARTILLERY.

68th Fd Regt., R.A., 97th Fd Regt., R.A., 154th Fd Regt., R.A., 13th Anti-Tank Regt., R.A., 30th Light A.A. Regt., R.A.

ENGINEERS.

5th (Bengal) Field Company, 10th (Madras) Field Company, 61st (Madras) Field Company, 41st (Bengal) Field Park Company.

SIGNALS.

10th Indian Division Signals.

INDIAN DIVISION

MEDICAL SERVICES.

14th Ind Fd Ambulance, 21st Ind Fd Ambulance, 30th Ind Fd Ambulance, 14th Ind Fd Hygiene Section.

ROYAL INDIAN ARMY SERVICE CORPS.

10th Ind DTT Coy RIASC., 10th Ind IBT Coy RIASC., 20th Ind IBT Coy RIASC., 25th Ind IBT Coy RIASC.

INDIAN ELECTRICAL AND MECHANICAL ENGINEERS.

125th Ind Inf Mob Workshops Coy, 126th Ind Inf Mob Workshops Coy, 127th Ind Inf Mob Workshops Coy, 10th Ind Div Rec Coy.

ROYAL ARMY ORDNANCE CORPS.

10th Ind Inf Div Ord Fd Pk Coy RAOC.

INDIAN ARMY ORDNANCE CORPS.

12th Ind Mobile Cinema Unit IAOC.

10th IND DIV PROVOST COMPANY.

407th FIELD SECURITY SECTION.

ONE SECTION M.A.I.U.

Those units which served with the

TENTH INDIAN DIVISION

*and went elsewhere
are also remembered.*



Illustrations by Capt. H. H. Sheldon, Official War Artist.

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